

# North Dakota Weed Seed Free Forage Program

April 2016

## 1) Objectives of the Program

- a) To prevent the spread of North American Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA) and North Dakota noxious weeds;
- b) To protect public and private lands from introduction of non-native, invasive plant species; and
- c) To provide a product which is recognized as acceptable and transportable onto public lands closed to all but certified weed seed free forage (WSFF).

## 2) Why is certified weed seed free forage required?

Public lands in North Dakota as well as other Western states require the use of forage that has been inspected and is certified as weed seed free. North Dakota's state parks, national parks, as well as U.S. Forest Service lands, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, military reservations, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife lands all require the use of certified WSFF. This is to mitigate the risk of introducing and/or spreading noxious and invasive weeds through forage used by horse riders, recreational land users and those using forage as mulch for projects.

## 3) What is "Certified Weed Seed Free Forage" under this program?

This is forage which has been inspected by designated agents ("inspector") of the Agriculture Commissioner prior to cutting. There is a reasonable and prudent visual inspection using standardized inspection procedures. Forage found to be free of weed seeds identified in the North American Invasive Species Management Association's (NAISMA) weed list (which includes North Dakota noxious weeds) may be certified.

## 4) How does forage certification work?

Forage crops must be inspected within ten days of cutting or harvest. Inspections are made on a field-by-field basis. Certification is based upon a reasonable and prudent visual inspection by inspectors using a standardized inspection procedure. A *Weed Seed Free Forage Inspection Report and Certification* [SFN 59074] form is completed and details whether or not forage meets the minimum standards. A field includes a surrounding buffer zone of 1 rod (16 ½ feet or 5 ½ yards). After baling, the producer requests special tags from the inspector for the exact number of bales produced and are affixed to each bale. Sites where certified forage will be stored must also be inspected and meet NAISMA standards in order to prevent contamination of certified forage.

## 5) How do I get my forage inspected?

Contact an inspector in your area and ask for a *Weed Seed Free Forage Certification Request to Inspect* [SFN 59075]. To locate an inspector in your area, check the North Dakota Department of Agriculture (NDDA) website at <http://www.nd.gov/ndda/program-info/weed-seed-free-forage-program/weed-seed-free-forage-inspectors> or call the NDDA at 701-328-2250 or 800-242-7535. Fill out SFN 59075 and send it to the appropriate inspector or to the NDDA. An inspector will contact you and make arrangements to perform the inspection(s).

## 6) Where can I find a list of certified weed seed free forage that is for sale?

The NDDA lists producers who have WSFF for sale and their contact information on the website. This is a free listing service that can be accessed by anyone with a computer and an internet connection. Also, check with the

agency where you will be using the forage (BLM, USFS, National Park Service, etc.) as they may have a list of producers and/or vendors of WSFF or have a supply on hand. Finally, you may contact the NDDA at 701-328-2250 or 800-242-7535 or at <http://www.nd.gov/ndda/program-info/weed-seed-free-forage-program/certified-weed-seed-free-forage-available-sale>.

**7) How do I know I am purchasing certified weed seed free forage?**

Certified WSFF will have a colored, dated tag affixed to each bale or will be baled with a specially purple/yellow colored twine. Forage from other states may have either a tag or a specially colored twine which identifies it as certified forage. The producer will also have a copy of the *Weed Seed Free Forage Inspection Report and Certification* [SFN 59074] form which indicates whether or not the field passed inspection and lists the numbers of the tags issued to him/her for each bale produced from each field.

For any questions or comments, please contact Lane Kozel with the North Dakota Department of Agriculture at 701-328-2250 (office) or by email at [ldkozel@nd.gov](mailto:ldkozel@nd.gov).